

Observations of Palaearctic migrants rare to Ghana

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Grimes (1987) has provided a thorough and useful summary of the ornithology of Ghana and, in particular, gives details of the occurrence of Palaearctic birds wintering there. However, most of the information refers to southern Ghana and we present here data obtained in the north, including details of 4 Palaearctic species new to Ghana. We visited northern Ghana from 20 Oct–18 Dec 1987 and netted birds at an old dried up river bed at Tono, near Navrongo (10°51'N, 01°03'W), where there is a large irrigation project. We also made regular censuses (25) along a line transect containing 23 acacia trees (*Acacia albida*) in order to monitor species that occurred outside the habitat where the netting took place. Details of our moult studies are given elsewhere (Bensch *et al.* in press). In addition, we also visited the following locations in southern Ghana: Panbros salt pans (8 Oct 1987), Elmina salt pans, Winneba and Muni lagoons (12 Oct 1987), Bia National Park (28 Dec 1987–5 Jan 1988) and Sakumo lagoon (8 Jan 1988). Some observations made during a reconnaissance trip (26 Nov 1985–14 Jan 1986) are also included.

Table 1 gives the ringing totals of 20 Palaearctic migrant species, and the numbers encountered during our line transects are presented in Table 2. Species worth special comments are given below. ("Grimes" = Grimes 1987; * = first published record for Ghana.)

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

One at Tono 12 Dec 1987. Only once previously recorded in Ghana (Grimes).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

At Sakumo lagoon near Tema, c. 95 on 8 Jan 1988. Grimes gives only 3 records, but it is now regular on lagoons along the coast (D. Daramani).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

In the Tono area: 3 on 17 Nov, 1 on 13 Dec and 20 on 14 Dec. At Sakumo lagoon c. 150 on 8 Jan 1988. In the north only previously recorded at Veve dam (Grimes).

*PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

A juvenile bird at Sakumo lagoon, 8 Jan 1988. It was identified at close range (20 m) feeding in a mud flat along the shore, by its heavily streaked breast sharply contrasting with the white belly, a short and slightly decurved bill, greenish legs, and in size almost twice that of Little Stints *Calidris minuta* feeding nearby. This is the first record of this species in West Africa; Urban *et al.* (1986) gives African records only from Morocco (4), Libya (1), Kenya (2), Zambia (2), Zimbabwe (3), Botswana (3), Namibia (1) and South Africa (10).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

In addition to many coastal observations, we recorded singles at Tono on 28 Oct and 3 Nov 1987. Grimes gives only one previous inland record.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

In the Tono area: 23 on 24 Nov, 13 on 3 Dec, 1 on 6 Dec, 1 on 7 Dec, 2 on 10 Dec, 1 on 12 Dec and 9 on 13 Dec 1987. Grimes expected concentration would be found in the north due to increase in rice cultivation.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

At Navrongo-Tono: singles on 29 Dec 1985, 5 Nov, 30 Nov, 3 Dec and 10 Dec 1987. Considered rare by Grimes, but probably overlooked.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Regularly in the Tono area from 21 Oct to 18 Dec 1987. The largest flock, c. 1500, was seen over a fire on 9 Nov, an unusually large number (cf. Grimes).

TAWNY PIPIT *Anthus campestris*

One on a grass lawn in a forest clearing at Bia on 29 Dec 1987. Less than 10 records reported by Grimes.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica cyanecula*

Netted regularly at Tono, with a possible increase in abundance early Dec (Table 1). Adult males were identified as *cyanecula* by their white breast spot.

***AQUATIC WARBLER** *Acrocephalus paludicola*

On 15 Nov 1987 we captured a juvenile in fresh plumage, indicating a rapid moult just after arrival in the winter quarters (Bensch *et al.* in press). Recorded south of the Sahara previously only from the inundation zone of the Niger (Moreau 1972).

SAVI'S WARBLER *Locustella luscinioides*

One or two at Tono 27–29 Dec 1985. In 1987 fairly abundant at the netting site at Tono, where 16 were captured (Table 1). From 5 Dec to 18 Dec, up to 5 were singing. Previously only recorded at Veia dam (Walsh & Grimes 1981, Grimes).

***GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

One was captured at Tono 28 Dec 1985 and 4 more there in 1987 (Table 1). We found evidence for a complete winter moult in this species (Bensch *et al.* in press). The first record for Ghana.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Two were captured (Table 1) and one was recorded (30 Nov 1987) during the transect counts (Table 2). Only very few records for Ghana, but is probably overlooked (Grimes).

***BONELLI'S WARBLER** *Phylloscopus bonelli*

First recorded on 30 Nov 1987, then regularly (max count 9) during the transect counts until 16 Dec (Table 2). Also one was singing on 7 Dec and 10 Dec, 4 km south of Navrongo. These are the first records in Ghana.

TABLE 3
Recoveries of birds ringed at Tono (10°51'N, 01°03'W), northern Ghana and of ringed birds at Tono

Species	Age Sex	Where ringed Date	Where recovered Date
<i>Luscinia svecica cyaneola</i>	1st yr ♂	Tono 7.xii.87	Bouches-du-Rhone (43°18'N, 05°24'E), France 25.iii.88
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	1st yr	Tono 5.xii.87	Kirrasanta, Finland (61°35'N, 21°32'E) 6.vii.88 23.v.89
	1st yr	Guernsey (49°30'N, 02°32'W) 26.viii.87	Tono seen 7.xi.87 caught 8.xi.87 seen up to 17.xii.87
	1st yr	Tono 27.xii.85	Tono, where ringed 1.xii.87
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	1st yr	Tono 26.xii.85	Tono, where ringed caught 17.xi.87 seen up to 1.xii.87

Ringing recoveries

Of 48 Palaearctic birds ringed at Tono between 22 and 29 Dec 1985, 2 were recaptured where ringed 2 years later.

Of the 366 Palaearctic birds ringed in 1987 only 2 have been either recovered or caught and released in Europe (see Table 3).

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